

# CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS

## Indicator 5. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

### At a Glance

Broiler production in  
Kentucky  
1990. . . . . 1,520,000  
1995. . . . . 64,500,000  
1999. . . . . 188,000,000

Number of  
concentrated animal  
feeding operations  
U.S. . . . . 12,660  
Kentucky. . . . . 250

**Background** The trend toward “corporate farming,” the raising of animals owned by large corporations on a contract basis with farmers, has emerged as a major economic, social and environmental issue in Kentucky. Kentucky has witnessed a significant increase in the number of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) within the past few years.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the number of CAFOs is primarily due to the siting of poultry houses brought on by demand from three chicken processing plants that located in Kentucky during the past several years. Broiler production has increased from 22 million in 1992 to 188 million in 1999.<sup>2</sup> Many farmers are contracting with corporations to raise poultry and other livestock in large concentrated feeding operations.

The environmental, health and quality-of-life impacts of concentrated animal feeding operations have become a growing concern in the state. CAFOs can produce large quantities of waste, which has the potential to pollute ground and surface water if not properly managed. For example, a CAFO with 2,500 hogs may produce 1.25 million gallons of waste a year. An operation with 100,000 head of laying hens or broilers can produce 600 tons of litter per year.

The waste can create odor problems and contaminate land and water resources.

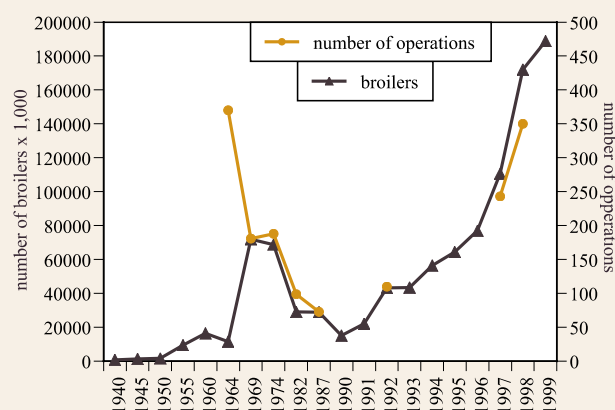
The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that there are 12,660 CAFOs in the United States.<sup>3</sup> There are estimated 250 CAFOs in Kentucky, 90 percent of which are in the western region of the state. McLean County has the largest number of CAFOs in Kentucky, with 36. Eighty six percent of McLean County’s CAFOs are poultry operations.<sup>4</sup>

**Goal** Protect public health and welfare from the environmental and health threats posed by animal confinement facilities and land application of manure.

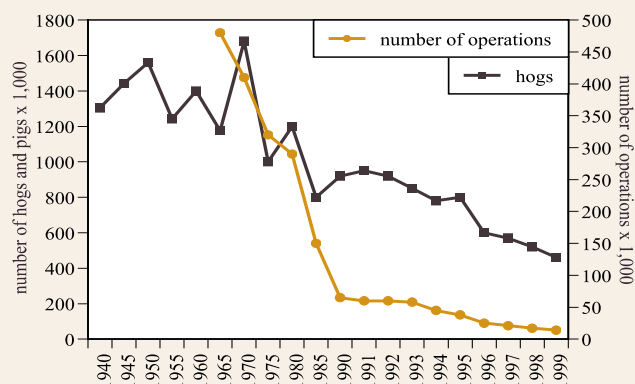
**Progress** State efforts to address environmental and other issues associated with CAFOs have been ongoing for the past four years. The Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet filed its first CAFO regulations in 1997. Those regulations focused on swine operations. The regulations expired in April 2000.

The agency issued another set of emergency regulations in Feb. 2000. The regulations were expanded to address poultry, swine and cattle CAFOs and established CAFO permit conditions for water pollution discharge permits as specified in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s joint “Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations” directive issued on March 9, 1999. The regulation also included siting standards for the construction of any new CAFO facilities and provisions that hold both the producer and integrator responsible in the management of animal waste. The regulations were estimated to

**Measure 1. Broiler Production and Number of Farms Producing Broilers in Kentucky**



**Measure 2. Swine Production and Number of Farms Producing Swine in Kentucky**



# NATURAL RESOURCES

## CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS

affect less than 250 operations in the state (including 176 poultry operations and 64 swine operations). The Kentucky Farm Bureau challenged the regulations alleging the state overstepped its statutory authority. The regulations sunsetted (expired) in April 2001.

Another set of emergency CAFO regulations went into effect on March 23, 2001. These regulations also specify water permits, siting requirements and integrator liability provisions. The constitutionality of the regulation was challenged by several farm organizations. On May 25, 2001 the Franklin Circuit Court declared the regulation void because it was similar to a regulation that had previously expired due to a legislative subcommittee veto. The state has since challenged the legality of the legislative veto process and has asked the court to allow the CAFO regulation to remain in effect until a decision is rendered.

Several counties in Kentucky have also enacted ordinances to protect private property from the impacts of CAFOs including Allen and Cumberland counties, and the city of Marion in Crittenden County.

Efforts are also underway to help farmers better manage animal feeding operations. Funding has been provided to Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) under the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Fund. To date, the program has funded 2,659 agricultural cost-share practices. During 2000, 544 of the 877 practices funded were for animal waste structures. These AFOs were provided \$9.3 million of the \$10.7 million in cost-share funds allocated in 2000. In addition to these cost-share funds, a portion of the \$180 million in state monies (\$18 million) received from the master tobacco settlement agreement will be used to help farmers address environmental issues associated with agricultural operations.

### Footnotes

1. Under state regulations, a CAFO is defined as a farm with at least 1,000 beef cattle, 700 dairy cattle, 100,000 laying hens or broilers, or 2,500 swine weighing 55 lbs. or more, or a facility that houses 300 animal units and discharges to the waters of the Commonwealth.
2. Kentucky Agricultural Statistics, 1999-2000, page 70.
3. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Regulation and Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, Page 60, U.S. EPA., December 15, 2000.
4. Kentucky Division of Water.

### Measures - notes and sources

**Measure 1.** Data incomplete, number of poultry operations was not collected on a regular basis. Definition of the number of farms changed in 1975 to a place that sells or could sell \$1,000 of agricultural products during the year. Source: Ky. Agriculture Statistics.

**Measure 2.** Definition of the number of farms changed in 1975 to a place that sells or could sell \$1,000 of agricultural products during the year. Source: Ky. Agriculture Statistics.

**Measure 3.** Source: Ky. Division of Water.

